

## Message Text

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44

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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R 161222Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7781

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 0637

EXDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: XGDS1

TAGS: PFOR ETAO XA

SUBJECT: EPMG'S RECOGNITION OF MPLA REGIME

1. IN A PAINFULLY FRANK PRIVATE 45-MINUTE CONVERSATION WITH  
POL COUNSELOR, MOFA'S AFRICAN-MIDDLE EAST CHIEF, ASSEFA LEGESSE,  
MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) THE EPMG'S SYMPATHY HAS LONG LAIN WITH THE MPLA.  
THIS HAD BEEN MADE CLEAR IN VARIOUS PUBLISHED STATEMENTS  
WELL PRIOR TO THE OAU SUMMIT AND IS IDEOLOGICALLY BASED.

(B) AS EVENTS UNROLLED JUST PRIOR TO AND DURING  
THE EXTRAORDINARY ANGOLA-OAU SUMMIT AND THE DIFFERENCES DIVI-  
DING AFRICA ON ANGOLA COULD BE BETTER PERCEIVED--PARTICULARLY  
WHEN IT BECAME APPARENT THAT AFRICA WAS SPLIT DOWN THE MIDDLE  
AND THAT THE ANTI-MPLA GROUP WAS ROCK HARD--RANKING MOFA OF-  
OFFICIALS WORKED DESPERATELY TO KEEP ETHIOPIA ON THE FENCE. IT  
WAS THEIR ASSESSMENT THAT THE HEAVY PRESSURES BEING EXERCISED  
ON ETHIOPIA BY BOTH CAMPS WOULD EVENTUALLY SUBSIDE; THAT  
ETHIOPIA'S PROPER POSITION, AS SUMMIT HOST AND SEAT OF THE OAU,  
OF NON-ALIGNMENT ON EITHER CAMP WAS RESPECTABLE AND TENABLE; AND,  
FINALLY, THAT THERE WOULD BE WIDE COMPREHENSION BILATERALLY FOR  
PRIVATE ETHIOPIAN EXPLANATIONS, THAT ETHIOPIA'S PROBLEMS  
AND INTERESTS REQUIRED HER TO AVOID TAKING SIDES.

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(C) THERE WAS TOWARDS THE END OF THE SUMMIT A

WIDE CONSENSUS WITHIN MOFA THAT THIS WAS INDEED THE PROPER LINE FOR ETHIOPIA TO TAKE AND THAT WHATEVER ITS EARLIER INTENTIONS, THE EPMG SHOULD CONTINUE TO FOREGO RECOGNITION OF ANY FACTION-BASED ANGOLAN REGIME. THERE WAS ALSO A VERY CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND IN ANGOLA: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TRIBAL FACTORS; THE REALITY OF MPLA'S CURRENT AND PREDICTABLY FUTURE DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIETS AND THE CUBANS TO MAINTAIN DOMINANCE PARTICULARLY IN THE BAKONGO AND OVIMBUNDU AREAS OF THE COUNTRY: AND OF THE RISKS OF PRO MPLA ALIGNMENT POSED ETHIOPIA IN CONNECTION WITH ITS ERITREA, TFAI, SOMALI, ETC. PROBLEMS IN ITS RELATIONS WITH ZAIRE AND LIKE-MINDED STATES.

(D) HOWEVER, MOFA WAS OVERRULED. THE FOREIGN MINISTER KIFLE WODAJO WAS DIRECTED TO DO WHAT HAS NOW BEEN DONE. MAJOR SISAY HABTE (THE DIRG'S POLITICAL AND FOREIGN RELATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN) WAS SIGNIFICANTLY ABSENT WHILE THESE EVENTS UNFOLDED.

2. THIS IS NOT THE ONLY SUCH INSTANCE, ASSEFA LEGESSE POINTED OUT. HE SAID THAT MOFA HAD CAREFULLY STUDIED THE SPANISH SAHARAN PROBLEM. IT HAD CAREFULLY CALCULATED ETHIOPIA'S INTERESTS AND HAD ADOPTED A CLEAR-CUT PRO-MOROCCAN POSITION. THERE WERE TOO MANY PARALLELS IN MOFA'S VIEW IN THE ALGERIAN/POLISARIO RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FOREIGN SUPPORTERS OF THE ERITREAN INSURGENTS--NOT TO SPEAK OF THE EXTERNAL INTERESTS BACKING THE AFAR INSURGENTS IN ETHIOPIA. TO MOFA'S SURPRISE AND DISMAY, HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED ETHIOPIAN MEDIA HAVE REPEATEDLY CARRIED ARTICLES STRONGLY SUPPORTING THE ALGERIAN/POLISARIO POSITION AGAINST MOROCCO. AT FIRST, MOFA APOLOGIZED TO THE MOROCCANS WHEN THESE ARTICLES APPEARED. IT HAS NOW STOPPED DOING SO BECAUSE IT HAS BECOME CRYSTAL-CLEAR THAT THERE ARE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE DIRG WHICH HAVE DECIDED THAT ETHIOPIA SHOULD SUPPORT ALGERIA OVER SPANISH SAHARA.

3. IN ETHIOPIA'S RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA, SIMILAR FORCES APPEAR TO BE IN PLAY, ASSEFA LEGESSE AGREED. HE WENT SO FAR AS TO CHARACTERIZE SUCH ACTIONS AS THE RECONFIDENTIAL

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GRETTABLE RESULTS OF DECISIONS MADE BY IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED NAIVE AND INEXPERIENCED MEN, DECISIONS WHICH CONTRAVENE ETHIOPIA'S NATIONAL INTERESTS.  
HUMMEL

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** RECOGNITION, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, SUMMIT MEETINGS, RESOLUTIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 16 JAN 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** MartinML  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976ADDIS00637  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** X1  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760019-0006  
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**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** MartinML  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 23 JUN 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <23 JUN 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <03 NOV 2004 by MartinML>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** EPMG'S RECOGNITION OF MPLA REGIME  
**TAGS:** PFOR, XA, AO, ET, MPLA, (ASSEFA LEGESSE)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006